

State Unified Plan

The Designated State Units (DSU)'s in South Dakota submit this attachment to the "Needs Assessment" section of the State Unified Plan. The public vocational rehabilitation agencies in South Dakota are submitting attachment 4.11(a) with the state plan update to reflect that a comprehensive statewide needs assessment has been accomplished with this plan submission. As a partner in the State Unified Plan, public vocational rehabilitation has conducted an assessment of the needs of all individuals with disabilities as per the needs assessment section of the State Unified Plan and the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act and state plan requirements. Public vocational rehabilitation includes workforce partners in this assessment process to assure that the workforce needs of the state to include individuals with disabilities were addressed. This assessment included the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, individuals with disabilities who have been unserved and underserved and all components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System.

2015 Triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

Initial planning for the 2014 South Dakota Program's Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment began in August 2013 at which time South Dakota (DRS) and South Dakota Service to Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) began discussions regarding the structure of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) for both programs. On November 7, 2013 the Executive Committee (members listed below) met and the initial timelines and process for the completion of the CSNA were drafted. On 12/6/2013, the CSNA Executive Committee representing both DRS and SBVI presented the process, proposed scope, and goals to the full Boards for both agencies. After coming to consensus with the particulars of this CSNA Process, the executive team initiated the execution of the CSNA strategy and goals. On February 13, 2014 the Executive Committee for the CSNA met again to review initial information regarding possible findings and the shape of possible primary service needs both in terms of data searches and narrative analysis. The Committee agreed in that meeting that the initial survey of information and potential finds were sufficient to the goals of the CSNA and scheduled the balance of the calendar so that the formal findings and priorities could be finalized at the end of March 2014 leaving sufficient time for public meetings.

Executive Committee

Eric Weiss: DRS Director
Marilyn Steffen: SBVI Board Chairperson
Elaine Roberts: DRS Board Chairperson
Gaye Mattke: SBVI Director
Bernie Grimme: Assistant Director
Twyla Eggers: Assistant Director

Source Reports and Data

1. DRS: Agency Year End Data 2013 (Board Report)
2. SBVI: Data Summary: RSA-2, RSA-113, and the RSA-911 Scott Sabella, Ph.D., CRC South Dakota Services to Blind and Visually Impaired Performance and Fiscal Comparison Report
3. DRS: Data Summary: RSA-2, RSA-113, and the RSA-911 Scott Sabella, Ph.D., CRC South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services Performance and Fiscal Comparison Report
4. DDN Public Meeting- SF, 04/25/2013
5. Governor's Task Force On Employing People with Disabilities
6. Lower Brule Disability Services Summit
7. Renewing the CHOICES Medicaid Waiver: Public/Tribal Forum & Questionnaire Results
8. SBVI 2013 Staff CSNA Survey of Needs
9. DRS: 2013 Staff CSNA Survey of Needs
10. SBVI Public Meeting 4/5/12
11. SBVI Public Meeting Notes Rapid City 4/13/12
12. South Dakota Advocacy Services Public Listening Session Summary
13. South Dakota Department of Human Services Strategic Plan
14. South Dakota DRS Board Meeting Minutes
15. South Dakota Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired Board Meeting Minutes
16. South Dakota Employment Works Task Force
17. South Dakota VR Service Providers- Training Survey Needs Survey
18. State of South Dakota Department of Transportation Public and Specialized Transportation Fiscal Year 2012
19. Survey of Parents/Caregivers of Children with Hearing Loss Final Report (submitted April 30, 2013)
20. Vocational Rehabilitation Program Federal FY 2014 Monitoring and Technical Assistance Guide
21. SBVI/DRS Consumer Satisfaction with Vocational Rehabilitation Services
22. South Dakota Indicator 14 2014 Report/South Dakota Department of Education

1) The Needs of Individuals with Disabilities who have the most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment Services

“Individual with a Most Significant Disability” means an individual with a disability who meets the criteria for having a significant disability and *in addition* has serious limits in two or more functional capacities (such as, but not limited to, mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome. Individuals who meet the criteria for this Priority Level I category are determined to be individuals with the “Most Significant Disability”. The needs identified for this category were as follows:

1. Employer Public Outreach Education

This category is composed of specifically identified needs to educate employers, work environments, and the public regarding the abilities and capacities of persons with the most significant disabilities. This category pointed to a need to change the larger social context in which vocational rehabilitation services were to be received by persons who are most significantly disabled.

2. Benefits Work Incentives

This need often was expressed through participants in the needs assessment process who expressed misconceptions or misinformation regarding work incentives for persons with the most significant disabilities. The very content of their participation described a need for education and dissemination of corrective information.

3. Transportation

Urban and rural transportation issues such as availability, scheduling, and cost contributed to this category of need which describes an ongoing need for persons with the most significant disabilities in South Dakota. The issues appear significantly acute in rural areas as well as those areas otherwise vulnerable to underservice in the realm of transportation options.

4. Transition Services

Transition services were frequently referenced in public forums and agency sponsored listening sessions. The emphasis was on the information and referral services required by families and students regarding preparation for the post-secondary life experiences. Transition services are also receiving strong emphasis in the strategic plans of the South Dakota Department of Human Services, the Governor's office and finally the anticipated federal RSA monitoring protocols.

5. Self-Advocacy Skills

This need category references expressions of need to assist persons with the most significant disabilities to represent their personal and service needs effectively and appropriately in social and work settings.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed new strategies in the State Plan to provide outreach/media activities for targeting employers and the general public, provide benefits specialists services for clients, improving transportation services, promote and increase transition services for students with disabilities, increase the self-advocacy skills of individuals with significant disabilities.

2) The Needs of Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities and have been Unserved or Underserved

DRS reviewed data, inquired through the DRS Board and surveyed staff regarding possible underservice for individuals with disabilities with a particular attention on assessing any unmet needs of individuals who are members of minority communities. In addition, as part of the CSNA, DRS submitted its 911 data to for an impartial analysis intended, in part, to determine if the patterns of service suggested underserved or underservice for any individuals, including minorities. The following needs indicate areas of concerns that arose from these assessment inquiries.

1. Services for Native Americans

This category compiles the expressions of service need specifically addressing the needs of Native Americans. In this category are survey responses and public forum commentary expressing a need for collaboration, local education events, information and referral, economic development, more appropriate provider services, and cultural awareness. Data also indicated Native American communities also deal with significantly more challenging conditions for transitions and transition services.

2. Employer Public Outreach/Education

The needs for the minority communities expressed in this category are similar to the needs expressed for the disability population in general except the inputs were biased towards toward the need for educational activities for the public addressing cultural sensitivity and language access.

3. Information and Referral Services

This category of need addresses the need for specific information regarding the network and system of human services and support in South Dakota including getting more information out in rural communities about Vocational Rehabilitation.

4. Transportation Rural

Even though transportation is a challenge in both rural and urban South Dakota, the perception of need is stronger in the rural low population communities where the possibilities of any public transportation options are much reduced. Again in minority communities where poverty and unemployment are present, this issue becomes proportionately more acute.

5. Rural Communities

Some rural communities in South Dakota have built in limitations and opportunities for employment due to low population, higher unemployment rates and higher concentrations of persons reporting disabilities. These factors combined make some rural areas high risk for underservice. When minorities are concentrated in these high risk rural areas, the level of risk is increased.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed strategies in the State Plan to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and have been unserved or underserved. The strategies include working with the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs; conducting listening sessions on Native American Reservations and working with minority service organizations to increase awareness of services that are available.

3) The Needs Of Individuals With Disabilities Who Are Served Through Other Components Of The Statewide Workforce Investment System.

South Dakota has a comprehensive and coordinated public and private statewide workforce investment system. There is a partnership of agencies and employer resources under the guidance of the South Dakota Workforce Development Council. Public vocational rehabilitation is represented on the State Workforce Council. In addition to the methods of identifying needs described elsewhere in this attachment, DRS personnel partner with the state workforce system on local workforce boards, and by attending and presenting at statewide workforce conferences.

Public vocational rehabilitation analyzes employment trends and labor market demands as an agency represented on the South Dakota Career Council. Annually, DRS participates with WIA on follow-up studies as to placements, retention, and wages. All of these initiatives allow DRS to guide services and resources in higher demand job areas as well as fields that will provide good wages and careers for individuals with blindness and visual impairments.

A significant need for individuals who are served through the workforce investment system is the coordination of services and funding with the vocational rehabilitation programs. Because of this need, the South Dakota public vocational rehabilitation programs and the Department of Labor issued a joint memorandum to the Vocational Rehabilitation offices, One-Stop Career Centers, and the Career Learning Centers. This memorandum addresses the confusion regarding the level of services available when funded through the WIA.

In the South Dakota CSNA the DRS staff surveyed indicated a high level of satisfaction with the current Work Force Partners system of services. The current challenges perceived by the needs assessment participants and respondents tended towards larger systemic issues at the level and interagency coordination and strategy.

1. Employer Public Outreach/Education

The major needs inputs in this area again referenced with high frequency the importance of employer education, coworker support systems for persons with disabilities and partnership based on good information regarding the needs and capacities of individuals with disabilities. The Workforce system was a natural reference point for the diverse parties to focus their efforts to meet this need.

2. Work Force Process

The state of South Dakota at the level of Governor and Department are focused in their strategic plans on creating a system in which people with disabilities can better express their abilities in the work force. The attention of the state's larger administrative systems is committed to enhancing the work force process to more effectively respond to people with disabilities. DRS, in turn, will experience the need to develop coordinated responses in its own service delivery relationships with the developments within these partner workforce organizations.

3. Skilled Employment Training

There were requests for the work force system to generate and offer more specialized skill training opportunities for people with disabilities.

4. Services For Native Americans

Frequently the scope of needs for people with disabilities residing in the Native American nations exceeds the scope of the VR program. For some of these needs the response will likely need to be scoped more appropriately to the work force system as a whole. Needs such as economic development, more job opportunities, transportation, supports of daily living were most frequently expressed in a larger service system context of which DRS VR would be one of many partners.

5. Local Economic Development

Again, in the at risk rural communities, the foundational economy of jobs is the central issue. For work to be available for persons with disabilities in the home communities where they choose to live, the current economic reality and structure needs to be changed and enhanced. The VR response is limited in this scale, and the perception of need implies a broader systemic state workforce response.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed strategies in the State Plan to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who are being served through the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The Division is co-located in 8 of the 11 offices with the Department of Labor and Regulation. The strategies include working with others to develop activities and materials that address employer and workforce outreach and education. Specific activities related to employer and public outreach and education are also included in the Governor's Employment Works Task Force report.

4. Assessment of the need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs.

The CSNA surveys and forums gave evidence that the public and DRS staff are looking for additional, enhanced resources to serve their clients through the provider world (Community Rehabilitation Programs). The data indicates that there is a staff perception that some change is needed in the provider service configuration to continue to effectively serve a wide and diverse

range of needs in the DRS caseload. The need changes expressed tended to revolve around specific training topics for providers and a greater variety of job placement options across South Dakota communities. The primary needs identified that relate to the South Dakota Community Rehabilitation Programs were:

1. Provider Training

Primarily staff contributed to this category citing the need for providers to work more effectively with persons with severe disabilities and minorities and also being more collaborative in terms of resources and working with VR. Due to turnover in the provider community and the changing needs of service, training issues are both systemic as well as more basic continuing education i.e. accessing hidden job market; serving persons with mental illness; job retention.

2. Job Placement Supports

DRS staff identified ongoing needs to have more and better trained job placement supports in their service areas (more prominent in rural communities). This need is also related to supported employment service needs for both specialized VR time-limited services and extended service capacity.

3. Community Rehabilitation Program Options

This category of need refers to those inputs from staff and community forums that expressed a desire for more options for providers and once again particularly in the rural communities. This need also included expressions of need for more specialized service providers (i.e. mental health service providers).

4. Employer Public Outreach/Education

Often this category was referenced in the context of provider services being more connected to the employer/employment resources in the community and being postured to more efficiently match VR clients needing jobs to employers needing employees.

5. Mental Health Services

The central issues expressed here was simply expressed need statements for the expansion of case management, supported employment, placement services be made available to persons with mental illness via the provider system.

Response Statement: The Division in conjunction with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Services has developed strategies in the State Plan to assess and improve the community rehabilitation programs. Training needs assessments are conducted with agency staff as well as service providers. Areas identified are addressed through a variety of training opportunities including conferences, webinars and seminars. In addition to Division sponsored training, providers can access training through the Region VIII

Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center and the Center for Technical Assistance and Training.